What is Child Life?

- Child life specialists address the psychosocial concerns that accompany health care experiences by promoting optimal child development and minimizing adverse effects.

- Using play and psychological preparation as primary tools, child life interventions facilitate coping and adjustment under circumstances that might otherwise be overwhelming.
Basics of Child Life

- Play and Normalcy
- Preparation
- Education
- Expressive activities
- Emotional Support/Family Support
Procedural pain is universal to all pediatric patients and needle stick pain is the most common source of pain in hospitalized children (Wong and Baker, 1988)

Child Life’s Role in Pain Management

- Non-pharmacological pain management using distraction
- Comfort Positions
- Cold Spray
- Emotional Support
Non-pharmacological Pain Management Using Distraction

- Does not mean “Hey, look over here so you do not know what is happening!”
- Gives alternative to focusing on pain
- Gives patient a job and control over some aspect during procedure
Guided Imagery

Guided imagery is an altered state of consciousness where a patient develops heightened focus on a particular idea for the purpose of relaxation and/or distraction.

3 events associated with guided imagery:
- Absorption - patient totally involved
- Disassociation - separate self from pain
- Suggestibility - suggest scenes, patient can agree or disagree

Patient must be in control to do guided imagery
Comfort Positions: Why?

- The supine position can be very vulnerable
- Allows the parent to support the child
- Helps the parent and child to feel more at ease and in control

“A child life specialist can enhance the parent’s ability to support the child. This can contribute to a patient’s ability to cope more effectively, often resulting in greater cooperation and success during the procedure.”

American Academy of Pediatrics
Comfort Positions: Advantages

- Fewer people
- Greater immobility of the child
- Close physical contact with a caregiver
- Caregiver has an active role and can support the child in a positive way
- Creates a sense of control for the child

Comfort Positions: Advantages

- Child’s movement is restricted by a comforting position of the parent. Being held feels much different than being held down.
- Larger work area

Ways Positions Can Be Utilized

- **IV /Blood Draw:**
  - Straddling lap of caregiver
  - Side-Sitting

- **IM injection in Thigh**
  - Leg is bent over parent’s lap, keeping thigh muscle relaxed

- **Port Access**
  - Sit forward-facing on parents lap
  - Parents can cross legs over child’s legs to prevent kicking
Ways Positions Can Be Utilized

- **NG Drop**
  - Hug parent during nasal aspirate
  - Child can also be held on parents lap facing outward with parents arms and legs wrapped around the child

- **Urinary Catheterization**
  - Child lies with head in parent’s lap on table
How to Make Them Work!

- Give parents clear instructions
- Rationalize/Describe hold as ‘helping you hold still’ or ‘giving you a big hug’
- Involve the parents and include them in what is happening
  - Decreasing stress level of parents
How to Make Them Work

- Children may still cry but tend to not scream or frantically flail
- Can be initiated as soon as child has received some trunk and head control (3-5 months)
- Parents should not be asked to hold down arms/legs
- Parents can lie next to child on bed for procedures which require supine position
- Compliment parents!
Cold Spray: Why to Use It

- Makes the task easier for nurses
- Increases patient and family satisfaction
- Increases success rate of procedure*
- Easy to use and less expensive than other methods
- Can be used for multiple procedures, multiple times

Cold Spray: Myths/Cons

- ‘He won’t remember’
- Vasoconstricts
- The spray stings and/or burns
Cold Spray: Things for You to Know

- Proper technique of using spray
- For infants/toddlers: Spray on gauze for 10 seconds, then hold on skin
- Spray at the proper distance from the arm
- Do procedure RIGHT after you spray the cold spray - do not let it sit
Emotional Support

- Comforting touch
- Encouraging words
- Developmentally appropriate medical explanations
  - Reduces anxiety related to anticipatory pain
The purpose of the ONE VOICE philosophy is to remind health care professionals to be cognizant of the clinical environment that we expose children to during medical procedures. Each of the letters of ONE VOICE stands for a different component of the environment that we need to remember...
**ONE VOICE**

One voice should be heard during procedure
Need parental involvement
Educate patient before the procedure about what is going to happen

Validate child with words
Offer the most comfortable, non-threatening position
Individualize your game plan
Choose appropriate distraction to be used
Eliminate unnecessary people not actively involved with the procedure
Bedside Pain Management

- **Play and Expressive activities**
  - Bubble blowing, familiar toys

- **Preparation and Education**
  - Teaching and practicing techniques
  - Understanding pain
Remember to Include Child Life...

- Reduce anxiety
- Learn techniques to cope with pain
- Support during painful procedures
- Clear expectations
Questions?

Katie Dillard, CCLS
katie.dillard@hcahealthcare.com
405.417.6099